

Message Text

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HA - JLCARLIN
EUR/WE MLISSFELT
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EUR/CAN - RJ SMITH
EUR/NE:HLDWOOLFLEY-
EUR/RPE:ERUSSEL
EUR/CE:SKLINGAMAN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
CINCPAC HONOLULU HAWAII 0000
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 215855

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINESE
REFUGEES

REF: A) BANGKOK 23733 (NOTAL); B) STATE 202732

1. WE ARE APPRECIATIVE OF BANGKOK REFTEL WHICH PROVIDED USEFUL INSIGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY BOTH POST AND UNHCR OFFICIALS, INCLUDING THE UNHCR THINKING ON POSSIBLE RAISING REFUGEE ISSUE AT NOVEMBER MEETING BETWEEN ASEAN AND COMMON MARKET, WITH "OUTSIDERS," INCLUDING U.S. AND AUSTRALIA, SITTING IN AS OBSERVERS. WE MUST BEGIN NOW TO MAKE SURE THAT USG, AUSTRALIA, AND ASEAN GET THEIR IDEAS TOGETHER SO AS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE SEPTEMBER VISIT OF HIGH COMMISSIONER HARTLING TO THAILAND AND MALAYSIA. WE WISH TO ENSURE THAT THE OCCASION PROVIDES A CLEAR OPPORTUNITY TO (A) IMPROVE COORDINATION OF PRESENT OPERATIONS WHERE POSSIBLE AND (B) CONSTITUTES FORUM FOR A DISCUSSION OF A FURTHER MEETING WHICH MIGHT STIMULATE GREATER CONTRIBUTIONS OF BOTH FINANCES AND RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES FROM OTHERS. TO DO SO, WE MUST DEVELOP SPECIFIC PROPOSALS WHICH CAN BE COORDINATED BEFORE WE BRING THEM UP DURING HARTLING VISIT.

2. FROM THE OUTSET, THE U.S., AUSTRALIA, AND ASEAN HAVE BEEN IN AGREEMENT THAT SOME SORT OF MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL

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CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION MIGHT BE USEFUL IN SEEKING WIDER SUPPORT FOR HANDLING OF THE REFUGEE PROBLEM. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS RECOGNIZED AS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT PARTICIPANTS IN SUCH A DISCUSSION SHOULD BE LIMITED, THAT IT BE AS LOW-KEY AS POSSIBLE, AND THAT PREPARATION SHOULD BE THOROUGH. WE HAVE BEEN RIGHTFULLY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE LOW-KEY ASPECT, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT THE SITUATION OVER THE NEXT YEAR OR SO IS LIKELY TO BE SO SERIOUS THAT THE ENTIRE ISSUE MAY HAVE TO BE ESCALATED IN TERMS OF THE LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ATTENTION IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE U.S., FRANCE, AUSTRALIA, CANADA, AND NEW ZEALAND. A LIMITED, LOW-KEY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY AS A PART OF, THE UNHCR EXCOMM MEETING SEEMS THE BEST MEANS TO BEGIN THIS PROCESS. FYI: WE HAVE TAKEN PART IN A NUMBER OF HEARINGS ON THE HILL AND WITH THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND HAVE A DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT CONGRESS HAS BECOME MORE AWARE OF THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROBLEM AND ITS URGENCY THAN WAS THE CASE EVEN SIX MONTHS AGO, EVEN TO THE DEGREE OF SOMETIMES PUSHING US TO TAKE MORE POSITIVE ACTIONS ON REFUGEE MATTERS. IT COULD BE POSSIBLE THAT THE IMPERATIVES OF THE REFUGEE SITUATION MAY BE HAVING A SIMILAR EFFECT ON OTHER GOVERNMENTS AS WELL. IN ANY CASE, THE UNITED STATES HAS A MORE BROADLY BASED CONSENSUS THAN ANY TIME SINCE 1975 FOR POSITIVE ACTION. AT THE SAME TIME, CONGRESS WANTS, AS DOES THE ADMINISTRATION, TO SEE OTHER COUNTRIES DO MORE. END FYI.

3. THE IDEA OF A "BRIEFING" OR A "SOLID CHAT" WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN KUALA LUMPUR IS FULLY ACCEPTABLE. WE WOULD HOPE THAT ASEAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS THE U.S. AND AUSTRALIA WOULD HAVE HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATION. WE WOULD ENVISAGE BOTH AMBASSADORS ABROMOWITZ AND MILLER AS WELL AS THE REFUGEE COORDINATOR FROM BANGKOK, AND POSSIBLY A DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE ATTENDING THE MEETING FOR US. WE BELIEVE THAT THE UNHCR SHOULD MAKE A CONFIDENTIAL

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DEFINITE COMMITMENT TO THE MEETING AND INFORM THE OTHER . GOVERNMENTS RIGHT AWAY, INDICATING AS WELL A DESIRE TO DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF A FOLLOW-ON MEETING.

4. THE AUSTRALIANS, WHO HAVE BEEN EXPLORING THE CONFERENCE IDEA ON THEIR OWN, TOLD DAS OAKLEY THAT THEY RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING WITH UNHCR OFFICIAL DARYL HAN, IN GENEVA AND HIS INITIAL SUGGESTIONS SEEMS VERY SOUND TO BOTH THE GOA AND TO US. HE PROPOSES A TWO-PART MEETING COVERING TWO DAYS, THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 20 AND

THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 21, WITH A QUICK VISIT BY HCR HARTLING TO SINGAPORE SANDWICHED IN ON THE AFTERNOON OF SEPTEMBER 20. THE BASIC AGENDA WOULD BE AN OPENING STATEMENT BY HARTLING FOLLOWED BY A GENERAL DISCUSSION IN WHICH ALL GOVERNMENTS REPRESENTED COULD PARTICIPATE. IN TERMS OF REPRESENTATION, THE UNHCR ENVISIONS ASEAN STATES, U.S., AUSTRALIA, FRANCE, CANADA, THE FRG (AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EEC), ONE SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRY (PERHAPS DENMARK), THE UK (PARTICULARLY FOR HONG KONG), THE ROK, JAPAN, NEW ZEALAND, AND ONE LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRY. THIS SEEMS TO BE A REASONABLE SPREAD IN TERMS OF GEOGRAPHY, SIZE, AND MEANS, REPRESENTATION WOULD LARGELY BE BY LOCAL AMBASSADORS THOUGH CANBERRA MIGHT SEND REPRESENTATIVES. FYI: WE UNDERSTAND FROM AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY THAT FRENCH WOULD NOT OBJECT TO SUCH A LOW-KEY MEETING. END FYI.

5. IN THEIR DISCUSSION, DAS OAKLEY AND THE AUSTRALIAN CHARGE TENTATIVELY AGREED ON WHAT THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING MIGHT HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH. WE WOULD HOPE THAT THE FIRST ITEM, THE HCR'S STATEMENT, MIGHT BE AN EXPOSITION OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO SUCH ISSUES AS (1) THE RATE OF REFUGEE FLOW BY LAND AND BY SEA, PLUS ESTIMATES OF CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS DURATION; (2) THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM, THEIR LOCATIONS, AND THE PROBLEMS POSED FOR HOST COUNTRIES; (3) THE RATE OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES, THE COUNTRIES OFFERING RESETTLEMENT, AND THE

POSSIBILITIES OF WIDENING THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESETTLEMENT; AND (4) THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE UNHCR AND FUTURE NEEDS AND PROSPECTS. FOLLOWING THIS PRESENTATION, INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD STATE THEIR VIEWS ON ANY ITEMS THEIR GOVERNMENTS CONSIDERED IMPORTANT. IN OUR JUDGMENT, THE MAIN THRUST OF THESE PRESENTATIONS SHOULD BE ON SPECIFIC ACTIONS WHICH COULD BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE REFUGEE SITUATION, BOTH IN TERMS OF PROCEDURES AND COOPERATION AND IN TERMS OF INCREASING LONGER-TERM RESETTLEMENT AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

6. WE SEE THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AS INFORMATIONAL AND EXPLORATORY BUT ALSO WISH TO USE THE MEETING TO ENCOURAGE THE UNHCR TO CALL A HIGHER-LEVEL FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE, PERHAPS IN GENEVA IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UNHCR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. ATTENDANCE AT THIS FOLLOW-UP MEETING PROBABLY WOULD BE AT THE SUB-CABINET LEVEL AND WOULD BE DESIGNED TO SET IN MOTION PROCESSES WHICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY RESULT IN WIDER SUPPORT BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR THIS PROBLEM THROUGH PLEDGES OF ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL AND RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT. IT WOULD BE RESTRICTED TO APPROXIMATELY THE SAME COUNTRIES THAT HAD ATTENDED THE KUALA

LUMPUR MEETING, PLUS ANY OTHER COUNTRIES IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A SIGNIFICANT IMMEDIATE POTENTIAL. THE EXCOMM MEETING AND ITS ATTENDANT EVENTS SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE MEETING ON REFUGEES TO BE HELD WITHOUT ATTRACTING UNDUE PUBLICITY.

7. AS FAR AS THE SUGGESTED FORUM PROVIDED BY THE ASEAN-EEC MEETING IS CONCERNED, WHILE WE BELIEVE THAT THIS OFFERS AN EXCELLENT OCCASION TO INCREASE EEC UNDERSTANDING AND CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPORT FOR THE INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROGRAM, WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT EITHER GROUP WOULD WISH TO SEE THEIR MEETING EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE UNHCR, THE U.S., AND AUSTRALIA, EVEN AS "OBSERVERS". WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE ASEAN TO RAISE THE ISSUE AT THAT MEETING AS A PRELIMINARY TO LATER MULTILATERAL DISCUSSIONS.

8. IN ORDER TO MAKE THESE OR ANY OTHER CONFERENCES USEFUL, WE MUST KEEP IN SIGHT OUR MAIN AND OVERRIDING OBJECTIVE: THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE OF RESETTLEMENT OPPORTUNITIES. THE ENTIRE REFUGEE PROGRAM DEPENDS ON RESETTLEMENT, FAR MORE EVEN, THAN IT DOES ON MONEY. TO THIS END, ALL POSTS ARE AGAIN REQUESTED TO RESPOND WITH SPECIFIC IDEAS TO BE USED IN OUR PREPARATIONS FOR KUALA LUMPUR AND AFTERWARD. FOR EXAMPLE, DO POSTS SEE ANY WAY TO IMPROVE COORDINATION ON HANDLING BOAT CASES BETWEEN SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM AND AUSTRALIA? HOW CAN THEY WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE UNHCR? HOW CAN PRESENT COUNTRIES OF

PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT WORK BETTER WITH THE UNHCR? WITH EACH OTHER? CAN THINGS BE DONE TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSING OF REFUGEES? HOW MIGHT THE U.S., AUSTRALIA, AND ASEAN JOIN IN MAKING APPROACHES TO OTHER GOVERNMENTS TO ACCEPT MORE REFUGEES FROM RESETTLEMENT OR GIVE MORE MONEY TO THE UNHCR? SHOULD THE UNHCR MEETING DISCUSS THAI PLANS FOR ENABLING A NUMBER OF LAND REFUGEES TO ACHIEVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY? ARE THERE CONCRETE MEASURES OTHER THAN RESETTLEMENT THAT WE HAVE NOT UNDERTAKEN THAT MIGHT MAKE THE REFUGEE BURDEN ON COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM IN ANY WAY MORE BEARABLE? WHAT IDEAS HAVE HOST GOVERNMENTS BEEN DEVELOPING ON THESE AND OTHER REFUGEE-RELATED ISSUES? EARLY INPUT FROM ALL POSTS WILL BE IMPORTANT, PARTICULARLY AS IT REFLECTS CONCRETE THINKING AND CONTACT WITH LOCAL SENSIBILITIES.

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9. FOR PARIS: DEPARTMENT EXPECTS TO DISCUSS THESE DEVELOPMENTS WITH FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIALS HERE AND URGE GOF TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE KUALA LUMPUR MEETING. REQUEST EMBASSY ALSO DISCUSS QUESTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH AMBASSADOR CHAYET AND REPORT RESULTS.

10. FOR GENEVA: REQUEST U.S. MISSION DISCUSS ABOVE WITH UNHCR AND CONFIRM THAT INTENT IS TO FOLLOW GENERAL OUTLINES FOR KUALA LUMPUR MEETING AS DESCRIBED ABOVE. ALSO PRESS UNHCR FOR CONFIRMATION THAT KUALA LUMPUR MEETING CAN BE REGARDED AS A FORUM FOR DISCUSSION OF DESIRABILITY OF A FURTHER MEETING ON THIS SUBJECT.

11. FOR ASEAN POSTS: REQUEST YOU OUTLINE TO APPROPRIATE SENIOR OFFICIALS PRESENT U.S. THINKING, DRAWING UPON ABOVE POINTS. THIS REPRESENTS DIRECT USG FOLLOW-UP TO DISCUSSION ON REFUGEES BETWEEN SECRETARY VANCE AND ASEAN MINISTERS ON AUGUST 3. CHRISTOPHER

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